Human Events *A Weekly Analysis for the American Citizen*

Editorial Office 1710 Rhode Island Ave., N. W., WASHINGTON 6, D. C. *Telephone* NATIONAL 2066

VOL. VII, No. 13, *Issue Number* 322, MARCH 29, 1950 *Editor:* FRANK C. HANIGHEN

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CHASING CHAMELEONS

by Freda Utley

The chameleon is a species of lizard which protects itself by its power to change the color of its skin so as to become indistinguishable from its environment. According to the dictionary, it also has a projectile tongue and moves slowly. Except for their demonstrated ability to move fast many of those whom Senator McCarthy is endeavoring to track down and prove to be Communists could very well meet the definition of chameleons. The Senator from Wisconsin, whose boldness is equalled only by his ignorance of the magnitude of the task he has set himself, must feel that he is in a nightmare in which his quarry continually eludes him, or changes its appearance as soon as he catches it.

Those who only yesterday were joining Communist fronts, advising the Administration to place its trust in Stalin, telling the public in speeches, books and articles that the Russian leader was an ever-loving friend of peace and democracy, and in general deluding the American people as to the nature of the Soviet regime, are today quite otherwise engaged. Either they are fighting a battle of words with the Soviet representatives in the UN, or giving advice as to how to "contain" Communism, or shaking their fists at the Kremlin from behind their desks in the State Department. And if rude men like McCarthy press them concerning their records they can reply in Dorothy Kenyon's words:

> "I do not deny that my name may have been used, even at times with my consent, in connection with organizations that later proved to be subversive but which, at the time, seemed to be engaged in activities or dedicated to objectives which I could and did approve."

And how can one deny the validity of this argument unless one is prepared to denounce, not only Roosevelt, Churchill, General Marshall but all those who followed in their train? One should recall that the American people -- whether Democrats or Republicans -- almost all welcomed Stalin as an ally, and rushed to give aid and comfort to the Soviet Union in order to destroy Germany and Japan.

Until about four years ago "friendship" for Soviet Russia was all the rage. The most respectable people appeared on the mastheads or platforms of the multitude of organizations with democratic names founded to ensnare the gullible, the ignorant and the vain. And many a rich and foolish man gave huge donations to Communist causes to pay for the privilege of being called a "liberal".

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It was also advantageous to be kind to Communists. During and immediately after the war the anti-Communist was often regarded as a potential, if not actual, Fascist; or at least as not quite nice to know, and dangerous to associate with if one hoped to get on in the world. Anyone in the State Department who took a dim view of the Soviet Union, or who questioned the popular assumption that the Chinese Communists were harmless "agrarian reformers", had little hope of promotion, and his advice was disregarded by successive Presidents and Secretaries of State. Alger Hiss, whom Roosevelt chose to take with him to Yalta, in preference to the loyal experts on Russia in the State Department, would never have been singled out for rapid advancement had he not been pro-Soviet.

As regards most of the magazines, newspapers, radio programs, universities, and research associations (such as the Institute of Pacific Relations and the Foreign Policy Association), it was about as hard for an anti-Communist, or critic of the Soviet Government, to obtain a hearing as for the proverbial camel to pass through the eye of a needle. All in all it was profitable to be red, or at least pink; and unprincipled careerists are as responsible as Communist sympathizers for the dangerous situation in which America is now placed.

II

Today the political climate has changed. It is no longer possible to be a Russia Firster while also posing as a loyal American. Today it is as necessary for the time servers to denounce Stalin as it was formerly to praise him. So the political chameleons have suddenly discovered that Russia is ruled by a totalitarian tyranny as bad and as dangerous as Hitler's. One is reminded of the old English song about the "Vicar of Bray" who "got preferment" by changing his religion in each reign from the Stuarts to the Hanoverians. Its refrain runs:

"And this is law that I'll maintain
Until my dying day, sir,
That whatsoever King shall reign,
I'll be the Vicar of Bray, sir."

Many of those responsible for the disastrous course taken by American policy from Teheran to Potsdam and for a year or two afterwards now cling together in preserving each others' reputations and denying their responsibility. They neither confess to, nor repent of, their past errors and sins. Moreover many of them still display a sneaking regard for Communism, even while condemning Russia's aggressive policies. This is evidenced by the friendly attitude displayed toward Tito.

The real Communists are, of course, as adept in changing their outward color for protective purposes as the careerists. Indeed it can be

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surmised that if there is a "top Soviet espionage agent" in the State Department, as charged by McCarthy, he will have taken such care never to display his true colors that his name is not included in the list of suspects. Those Government employees who embraced Communism out of conviction and openly displayed their sympathies, can no doubt count upon the discreet silence of the careerists who no longer follow the Party line. And might not the threat of exposure be used by the Communists to blackmail those who formerly influenced, or implemented, American policy in accordance with Moscow's interests, but are now pretending that they have always been loyal Americans? Could be.

III

On the other hand those Government employees who have never been sympathetic to Communism, or who have never gone along with the Communists in hope of preferment, and are in a position to know or suspect which of their colleagues are disloyal or "security risks", cannot testify for fear of losing their jobs. This seems to me the most shocking aspect of the present Senatorial investigation, yet it causes little or no comment. The newspapers are full of criticisms of the concept of guilt by association, and of the infringement of civil liberties entailed by loyalty investigations. But no one seems to view with alarm reports that loyal Government employees hesitate to testify against those whom they have reason to believe are Communists, for fear of being victimized by the Administration. And the manner in which Senator Tydings has conducted the investigation, coupled with the Executive's reluctance to allow the Senate Committee to see the files of those accused of subversive activities, suggests that the Administration is more concerned to save face than to root out Communists in the Government service.

We must have gone further than we realize along the road which leads to totalitarian tyranny when it is assumed that the Administration has the right to demand of Government employees that their first loyalty be to the Party in power, not to their country or their conscience; and when Americans are willing to forego their inalienable rights under the Constitution rather than lose their jobs.

Our Military Government in Germany was instructed at the war's end to hold all Germans guilty of the crimes of the Nazis, and specifically to punish anyone who had been associated with, collaborated with, or been related to the Nazis. Our Law of Liberation from National Socialism, as the de-Nazification decree was called, penalized not only all

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Party members and their wives and children, but also all members of associations affiliated with the Nazi Party. In other words the principle of guilt by association was made the law of the conquered territory. I have yet to find a "liberal" commentator, or columnist, now insisting that no man should be suspected on account of his associations, who ever raised his voice to condemn the de-Nazification decrees.

IV

It is the decline of ethical standards and of belief in universal principles of justice, together with the lack of moral courage, so evident today, which has allowed the Communist disease to spread, and which makes it so hard to cure. McCarthy would achieve more positive results if he concentrated on proving that those who direct United States policy are poor security risks on account of their lack of integrity, their bad judgment, their ignorance and their gullibility, as shown by the record. Those who directed American policy along the line most advantageous to Moscow, whatever their motives may have been, are far more dangerous than espionage agents. The harm done to the Republic by Alger Hiss at Yalta and San Francisco was incomparably greater than the activities which helped persuade the jury to convict him.

The difficulty is that a real inquiry into the causes for the disastrous policy toward Russia pursued by Presidents Roosevelt and Truman would require a quality of greatness in certain eminent Americans which they have so far not displayed. If General Marshall, for instance, were to testify before the Senate Committee would he admit his mistakes in China? Would he take responsibility for having prepared the way for Moscow to conquer China -- by his policy of placing an embargo on arms to Chiang Kai-shek, and by pressing the Generalissimo to take the Communists into the Nationalist Government? Would he, at least, fix the responsibility on treacherous State Department advisers? Without such frank speaking, it is difficult to foresee real progress from loyalty investigations.

Basically the problem is up to the American people. They have the power to make an irresistible demand that the Administration which they elected follow the courageous and honest path. Unless the people exert this power, their undoubted desire to defeat totalitarianism will be thwarted by the Vicars of Bray.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. VII, No. 13

APR 4 1950

By Frank C. Hanighen March 29, 1950

UNEMPLOYMENT: The fight about subversives in Government has been going great guns. But, despite the anxiety thereby generated in the State Department, the affair has discernibly left the Key West "White House" comparatively unruffled. The President's impudent decision to retain Jessup, one of the authors of our bankrupt policy in China, indicates his contempt for the intelligence of the American people. According to some observers, what Truman is counting on is another issue which will throw foreign questions into a position of secondary interest. For the new unemployment problem hangs over Washington -- over both Congress and the Executive -- like a portent, but also like a hope. It is a commonplace that the politicos deem this a year of issues -- but not of any earnest attempt to solve issues. Hence the GHQ of the Administration feels supremely confident that a lot can be made of the "young folks unemployment" before the polls open next fall.

Rumors about the inevitable planners' "solutions" are afloat -- although these reports indicate that the stage directors have not yet decided on the choreography. Keyserling and colleagues are said to be studying just how to give a new appearance to the Spence ("In Stalin's Footsteps") bill which died a-borning last year. This measure may appear under some other guise and phraseology. Pump priming schemes by Government are spurred by a developing pattern of union activity. Newspapers have reported that the Canadian branch of the CIO is setting up a federation of unemployed, in part to pre-empt this field from Communist attempts to organize it. And pump priming by Government seems to be the principal aim of the Canadian project. It is believed that President Philip Murray of the CIO is thus trying out this notion first on our neighbor to the North; later he will unfold the U.S. counterpart. But, ere then, it is expected that the White House will unveil some proposals -- quite incapable, of course, of solving unemployment this year or ever. But -- and this is most important to the Administration -- these proposals will present a guerdon of hope to the unfortunate idle between now and next November.

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BUSINESS CONDITIONS: Despite growing unemployment, business prospects for the rest of 1950 appear favorable to those private economists in the nation's capital who carefully scrutinize every index which comes along. Until recently, they hedged because of uncertainty regarding two of the big industries which have played such important roles in maintaining our high business level. But now it looks like a very good, perhaps a much better, year for the automobile business, with reports of very brisk spring sales of cars. And this week there has been under study a report which suggests the possibility of a good building year.

The latter is especially good news, for there have been grave doubts about this area of the economy. Demographic experts, analyzing census figures, have forecasted that the rise in the number of families (which was sharp in 1946-48) is due to fall off in 1950 to the pre-war average, with consequent effects on the demand for dwellings. Also, there has been a slight decline in the figures on occupancy. Finally, costs have apparently levelled off on the average, and so the industry will probably not have -- as it did in 1949 -- the benefit of a decline in such costs.

But one factor makes the analysts guess that building, despite these negative signs, should hold up fairly well for the rest of the year. The factor of Government financing of housing has become highly important. It is estimated that at

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least 40 per cent of private housing is dependent on mortgage insurance guarantees and mortgage-purchase by the Government -- through FHA, "Fanny Mae" (Federal National Mortgage Association), etc. In Washington, Congress is expected to vote full funds to keep such activities going. All this, economists agree, constitutes another Government support program -- and therefore unsound. But, sound or not, these supports may prolong the building boom throughout the year. In short, with favorable prospects in both autos and building, the ride should continue at the present pace through the rest of 1950.

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PRESS COVERAGE ON GERMANY: It happened in Washington. But you probably heard little of it from the press and radio news programs. When High Commissioner John J. McCloy recently paid a hurried visit to the Capital, he was closeted in executive session with members of a Senate committee. There, Senators McKellar and Wherry laid down the law to him and demanded that the dismantling of the big Salzgitter steel works be stopped immediately. The Senators demanded that the American High Commissioner to Germany should forthwith order the British to cease this piece of industrial sabotage of European economy. McCloy agreed and by phone obtained interruption of the dismantling until he should return to Germany. So much for this interesting episode. Why wasn't it reported throughout the press? Executive sessions are not airtight and, if correspondents had so desired, some at least of this story should have leaked into the newspapers. Why didn't it? The answer may be given: for the same reason that coverage of Germany sent to the U.S. press from their correspondents in Germany is so bad.

We have touched on the matter in this column before, particularly as regards Mr. Drew Middleton of the New York Times. The situation has become more glaring as visiting correspondents -- such as Dorothy Thompson and Joseph Alsop, Jr. -- have recently appraised the picture realistically and scored beats which obviously the resident correspondents should have gotten. Why did not the latter perform their work? We suspect that in many cases it is not so much the fault of the individual newspaperman on the job as of his editor at home. If the former has sent some stories that picture the German as something less than a potential Nazi and these fail to appear in print, and if he gets queries from the home office to follow up yarns about "revival of Right-Wing nationalism" or "resurgence of Naziism", he "kinda gets the idea" -- that is, if he wishes to retain his job. And why would editors adopt such a policy? Well, stories favorable to Germans aren't too popular with some of their readers who still cling to the hates of the recent war. And, anyhow, many editors probably calculate that foreign news isn't too interesting to most readers nowadays. Why risk some time-consuming quarrels or controversies with readers or pressure groups? Something like this, we feel, has deprived the U.S. newspaper reader of the real story on Germany, unless he happens on some dispatches from Miss Thompson or Mr. Alsop as they make the rounds of Europe. This situation may well last until editors awake to the necessity of giving lengthier and better coverage to what is the vital friction point in Europe.

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THE CASE OF POINT FOUR: (Edna Lonigan writes us the following on Point Four from Capitol Hill.) Formally introduced over a year ago in President Truman's Inaugural, Point Four called for "technical aid" to "backward areas", and "encouragement" of private investment. Business men and economists, who knew we had been making both loans and philanthropic gifts in backward areas for 50 years, knew also that Government spending could not add a single dollar or an extra technician to our work abroad. So they made the gross political error of assuming the program was unimportant and would soon fade out.

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Seen through political lenses, however, the program was not unimportant. The separation of "technical aid" from capital is not absurd, but a refinement in the art of Government planning. Instead of having to get the capital for foreign investment through taxes, the Government merely supplies a directing staff to "coordinate" private projects, and lets private lenders supply the capital. This method, perfected by the public housing groups, might be called the spider web method of extending Government control and direction of the private economy. Under Point Four, private foreign investing, foreign trade, and the manufacture of capital goods, will be drawn into the web, together with the engineers, economists, chemists, and agricultural experts.

The absence of facts about Point Four is matched by a curiously widespread pressure for the bill from the UAW and other unions, women's clubs, and similar large membership organizations which are part of the solar system revolving about Big Government. Since concrete information about Point Four is so hard to come by, either these organizations have done a remarkable research job, all at the same moment, or someone has skilfully synchronized their activities. Now, a bit precipitately, Point Four has been made part of the ECA bill, and Congress is urged to pass it immediately.

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BEAUTIFUL LANGUAGE: Title III of HR 7797 provides that the President may make agreements with any foreign nation, or with UN, to give or lend American Government personnel or "facilities", for technical aid. The bill is, as Smith of Virginia put it, "open at both ends". The specific appropriation mentioned is for $45 million, but the President can assign any American Government personnel to this program. He may "make contributions to the United Nations". Or he may make loans or grants to "any person, corporation . . . any foreign government or any foreign government agency".

Almost any part of the budget for State, Commerce, Agriculture, or any U.S. agency, may be applied to angles of this vast program. Congress will never be able to find out what various bureaus are spending, or what the total cost of foreign aid adds up to. This is delegation of the legislative power.

Every step is to be taken through or reported to UN. The President will stop the program if Congress wishes -- or, indeed, if UN so desires! Here we see the rapidly developing transition to world government. Under this mutual exchange of technical knowledge we shall be broadcasting our industrial skills, and processes (and perhaps our formulas) to every member of UN, including the U.S.S.R.

Private firms and agencies may think they can by-pass this many-armed octopus, but the bill contains that familiar word "integrated". No aid may be given any nation unless all investment and welfare fit into an "integrated economy". Integrated economies are dying economies of course, but they are obedient.

Lawrence Smith of Wisconsin, one of the boldest speakers on foreign affairs in Congress, opposed the Point Four bill, but confusion was so carefully produced by the proposal to appropriate part of ECA funds in surplus commodities, and by Vandenberg's suggestion for a long-term study of foreign aid, that the opposition did not rally from the shock in time.

Whether Title III passes or fails, the Administration wins. If it passes, spending will balloon upward, as ECA falls. If Point Four fails, the Administration will attack every Member of Congress who voted against it, in his home district, as a hard-hearted man who enjoys seeing Asian or African babies die of starvation. The pressure groups in each district are already trained to take up the chorus.

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Book Events

My Retreat from Russia, by Vladimir Petrov; translated by David Chavchavadze. New Haven: Yale University Press. $4.00. Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

Mr. Petrov was the young engineering student at the Leningrad Institute who was arrested in the police terror that followed the assassination of Kirov in December, 1934. His experiences as the prisoner of the NKVD and as a slave laborer in the Siberian Arctic were described in Soviet Gold, published late last year and reviewed in this space October 26, 1949. The present work concerns the period following his release from the prison camp at the expiration of his six-year sentence. It describes his long journey across Asiatic and European Russia to his native city in the Northern Caucasus, which after many fantastic adventures he managed to reach just before it was invaded and occupied by the Germans, and his further flight westward when the territory was reconquered by the Red Army. At the end of the war, and of his story, Mr. Petrov was in Italy; he arrived in Milan just in time to see the battered and befouled corpses of Mussolini and La Petacci hanging head-downwards in the public square. Inured though he was to horror, the sight seems to have shocked him; but he reflected that "the spectacle of Stalin hanging thus next to Vishinsky would have disturbed me less".

Like so many other recent mémoires by Russian refugees from the Soviets, Mr. Petrov's suffer somewhat from being written in the manner of a novel. Pages upon pages of conversation, set down verbatim eight or ten years after utterance, impose a needless strain upon the credulity. There is also some vagueness about places and dates, arising from the author's narrative method and also perhaps from his desire to protect acquaintances who may still be living within Communist dominions. And one can but marvel at the special providence that extricated Mr. Petrov from so many perilous situations, and at his exhaustless ingenuity in keeping himself and his friends provided with food, funds and protective documents. Nevertheless, Mr. Petrov in his wanderings unfolds a vivid and memorable panorama of universal catastrophe, of successive societies demoralized by danger and by the destruction of all accustomed norms of life, and of those violent uprootings of peoples that have become the historical commonplaces of our epoch.

In Southern Russia, according to Mr. Petrov's testimony, a very large proportion of the population welcomed the Germans as deliverers. They were of course soon disillusioned, especially when former Communists and even NKVD officials began to infiltrate themselves into the SS and into other positions of power. Even so, the Germans were deemed the lesser evil; it was otherwise in the Soviet Ukraine after the brief honeymoon. There the military rule had been replaced by the brutal stupidities of the Gestapo and by a rapacious civilian administration responsible only to Herr Rosenberg. The happiest situation between conquerors and conquered was at Odessa where the mildly corrupt and easy-going Romanians introduced a short season of free enterprise and relative abundance. Romania itself appeared to Mr. Petrov, as it was to appear afterwards to the Red invaders, a material paradise; the very slums of Bucharest seemed preferable to the most luxurious quarters of Moscow. Yet he knew that Romania would soon be no safe place for a Russian who was not only a convicted counterrevolutionary but had also served in a municipal administration under the German occupation. He went on to Vienna, supporting himself, as he had been doing since his flight from the Caucasus, by modest dealings in the black markets, but assisting on the side in the organization of General Vlasov's short-lived Russian Army of Liberation, recruited under German patronage among the prisoners of war, the White Russian populations of Central Europe and the vast swarms of new emigrees, who had, like Mr. Petrov, followed the German armies in retreat.

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